

§ 33.35

(c) The ALJ shall exclude irrelevant and immaterial evidence.

(d) Although relevant, evidence may be excluded if its probative value is substantially outweighed by the danger of unfair prejudice, confusion of the issues, or by considerations of undue delay or needless presentation of cumulative evidence.

(e) Although relevant, evidence may be excluded if it is privileged under Federal law.

(f) Evidence concerning offers of compromise or settlement are inadmissible to the extent provided in Rule 408 of the Federal Rules of Evidence.

(g) The ALJ shall permit the parties to introduce rebuttal witnesses and evidence.

(h) All Documents and other evidence offered or taken for the record must be open to examination by all parties, unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ pursuant to § 33.24.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(f)(g)(2)(E))

§ 33.35 The record.

(a) The hearing must be recorded and transcribed. Transcripts may be obtained following the hearing from the ALJ at a cost not to exceed the actual cost of duplication.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803 (f))

(b) The transcript of testimony, exhibits and other evidence admitted at the hearing, and all papers and requests filed in the proceeding constitute the record for the decision by the ALJ and the Department head.

(c) The record may be inspected and copied (upon payment of a reasonable fee) by anyone, unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ pursuant to § 33.24.

(Authority: 5 U.S.C. App. 2, section 11)

§ 33.36 Post-hearing briefs.

The ALJ may require the parties to file post-hearing briefs. In any event, any party may file a post-hearing brief. The ALJ shall fix the time for filing these briefs, not to exceed 60 days from the date the parties receive the transcript of the hearing or, if applicable, the stipulated record. The briefs may be accompanied by proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. The ALJ

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may permit the parties to file reply briefs.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803 (g)(1)(2)(E))

§ 33.37 Initial decision.

(a) The ALJ shall issue an initial decision, based only on the record, that contains findings of fact, conclusions of law, and the amount of any penalties and assessments imposed.

(b) The findings of fact must include a finding on each of the following issues:

(1) Whether the claims or statements identified in the complaint, or any portions of the complaint, violate § 33.3.

(2) If the person is liable for penalties or assessments, the appropriate amount of any such penalties or assessments considering any mitigating or aggravating factors that the ALJ finds in the case, such as those described in § 33.31.

(c) The ALJ shall promptly serve the initial decision on all parties within 90 days after the time for submission of post-hearing briefs and reply briefs (if permitted) has expired. The ALJ shall at the same time serve all parties with a statement describing the right of any defendant determined to be liable for a civil penalty or assessment to file a motion for reconsideration with the ALJ or a notice of appeal with the Department head. If the ALJ fails to meet the deadline contained in this paragraph, he or she shall notify the parties of the reasons for the delay and shall set a new deadline.

(d) Unless the initial decision of the ALJ is timely appealed to the Department head, or a motion for reconsideration of the initial decision is timely filed, the initial decision shall constitute the final decision of the Department head and shall be final and binding on the parties 30 days after it is issued by the ALJ.

(Authority: 31 U.S.C. 3803(h)(i))

§ 33.38 Reconsideration of initial decision.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (d) of this section, any party may file a motion for reconsideration of the initial decision within 20 days of receipt of the initial decision. If service was made by mail, receipt is presumed to